



FACT SHEET

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Sustainability at Washington State Penitentiary

Operations

- **Sustainability Committee:** [Washington State Penitentiary](#) has a 30-member sustainability committee that meets bi-monthly to review and make recommendations on ways to make operations and facilities more sustainable.
- **Garden and Greenhouse:** Offenders grow cabbage, lettuce, several varieties of squash and green peppers in organic gardens. The plantings are started in the greenhouse and then transplanted in fields. The gardens are expected to produce 60,000 pounds of food in 2011 and will supplement offenders' meals.
- **Local Produce:** Beginning in 2010 the prison will purchase some of its produce from qualified local farmers. That will reduce fuel consumption, provide fresher fruit and vegetables for the offenders and support the local economy.
- **Recycling:** The updated recycling facility can recycle almost any item in the facility, greatly reducing the amount of garbage that is hauled to the city landfill.
- **Composting Food Waste:** The Penitentiary partners with Correctional Industries on at-the-source sorting and converting food waste into liquid fertilizer which is injected into the fields. This diverted more than 27 tons from local landfills in the past year.
- **Hazardous Waste:** Since 2003 the prison has significantly reduced the amount of hazardous waste it produces by 95 percent. In the past activities like painting, powder coating, plant maintenance, Correctional Industries and automotive repair created dangerous waste. By substituting harsh products with environmentally friendly ones, changing engineering practices and we have reduced our waste generation from an average of 3,500 pounds per month to an average of 75 pounds per month.
- **Energy Consumption:** The Penitentiary has reduced its energy consumption by taking advantage of incentive programs offered by local utilities, encouraging staff members to turn off lights and computers when they are not in use, conducting fewer tests of emergency generators and replaced inefficient lighting.
- **Perimeter Lighting:** The staff is taking advantage of an energy-saving program offered by local utilities to reduce the amount of energy required to light the perimeter.

- **Laundry:** Grouping an individual's laundry using a belt rather than bag appears to be reducing the drying times by 50 percent in early tests.
- **Fuel Reduction:** The Penitentiary reduced its pumped fuel consumption by 13.5 percent by converting to hybrid-engine vehicles and electric carts when possible while continually reviewing vehicle use in order to conserve and increase savings.
- **Paper Plates and Cups:** Paper plates and cups can no longer be ordered for staff use or for use in the commons area.
- **Eating Utensils:** The facility converted from disposable eating utensils to "sporks"- a spoon and fork combination- to reduce costs and waste by no longer requiring spoons, forks and knives. It reduced the per-offender costs from 21 cents to 7 cents each day when a disposable utensil is required.
- **Elimination of Styrofoam:** The facility eliminated all Styrofoam food containers.
- **Trashcan Liners:** The staff is reducing the number of trashcan liners it is using and has a goal of reducing usage by 40 percent of the next year and save an estimated \$17,000 each year.
- **Paper Reduction:** The facility encourages electronic copies whenever possible and use recycled paper. The staff is reviewing which documents that have traditionally required paper copies can be submitted electronically instead.

Other Proposals

- **Worm Casts:** Worms can assist in both the greenhouse and in the gardens. We could process some of our food waste using worms. We can then use the byproduct as a soil amendment for use in the greenhouses.
- **Gray Water Usage:** The staff is researching ways in which gray water can be used across the facility.

Community Projects

- **Dog Program:** The offenders train dogs from local animal shelters how to obey basic commands such as sit, stay, down and leave it. The dogs are also socialized with not just people, but with other dogs as well. With the help of the Blue Mountain Humane Society and a volunteer trainer, the program has expanded to involve about 24 offenders.

Facilities

- **LEED-Certified Buildings:** During a recent expansion, the Penitentiary built 11 new buildings, including four close-custody living units, an Intensive Management Unit, a Health Services building and support buildings, all of which are LEED-certified by the U.S. Green Building Council.

More Information

Visit the Department of Corrections' [sustainability website](#) for statewide information.